

# ARE YOU WILLING TO BE SAVED?

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JOHN 7:14-18 • TV424A

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by

**HENRY T. MAHAN**

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### **John 7:14-18**

*Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.*

I want you to listen carefully to the title of my message today. I'm going to speak to you on the subject: "**ARE YOU WILLING TO BE SAVED?**" Now, I don't want you to answer the question quickly. Wait until I finish the message and after I complete the message, then answer the question, "Are you willing to be saved?"

We are going to turn in our Bible to **John Chapter 7**. I'll be reading four or five verses, beginning with verse 14. Turn to **John 7:14**. Why don't you get a Bible and see what our Lord has to say. Here it is, "*Now, about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught.*" The Feast of the Tabernacle was an eight-day feast, about the fourth or fifth day of the feast the Lord went to the temple.

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All of the religious people from that area had gathered in Jerusalem for this Feast of the Tabernacles. Our Lord attended the feast. He went up about the middle of the feast. He went to the temple and there He preached to many people. We are not told what His subject was on this occasion but, I'm sure as always, that our Lord expounded the Old Testament Scriptures. I would say that He probably told them the true meaning of this Feast of the Tabernacle. He is the fulfillment of the Feast of the Tabernacles.

Now, listen to this next verse, He began to teach. He went to the temple to preach and teach to these people. "*The Jews, (all these religious folks and their leaders) marveled.*" They were astonished at His Words (when He spoke on another occasion, one of them said, "*No man spake like this man.*") Here in verse 14, they said, "How does this man know so much?" "*How does He know letters having never learned?*" That is, He never attended our schools, He never studied under our supervision, and He never sat at the feet of our recognized teachers. How does this man know what He knows having never attended our schools?

The Lord Jesus answered them, look at the next verse, **verse 16**, "*And the Lord Jesus answered them and He said to them, My doctrine is not mine.*" What He is saying is, "My doctrine is not of man" (because He was at that time, in the flesh). He was a man, the Son of man. So, He said, "*My doctrine is not of man nor is it learned from man. My doctrine is the Word of My Father which has sent Me into the world.*" My doctrine is not learned of man. You don't learn My doctrine in school. You don't learn it from your supervisors and your professors. My doctrine is not from man and is not of man. My doctrine is not about man. "*My doctrine is the doctrine of My Father which sent Me.*"

Listen to this statement in verse 17: "*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*" If any man will do His will, if any man really desires to know God's will, any who really desires to know God's message and God's way, if any many wills to know God's will, he will know the doctrine whether it be of God or whether it be of man.

Now, my friends, the doctrine of salvation, the way of eternal life is not of man, nor do men reveal it. It didn't come from men. The doctrine of salvation of eternal life is of God. The doctrine is planned by God, purposed by God, and taught by God. The doctrine is revealed in the heart by the Spirit of God. A man may really desire to know the truth of God, and the truth of the mysteries of God. If he wills to know and to do the work of God and the will of God, if he wills to or if he desires to, he'll know the doctrine. God will teach him.

In **John 6:44, and 45** says this, I'm sure you are familiar with this scripture. Our Lord said, "*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*"

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They said of our Lord, when they heard Him speak. They said, "*How does this man know learning? How does He know these doctrines having never learned?*" They said, "He has never been taught and He has never been to our schools." You don't learn this in the schools of religion. Christ said, "*They shall be taught of God and every man that hath heard and learned from the Father, cometh unto Me.*"

I constantly hear people say this. You may have said this or heard people say this, "Oh, there are so many preachers today; there are so many denominations, and so many different doctrines. I just don't know what or whom to believe." Have you ever said that? "Oh, there are so many preachers and denominations and so many different doctrines, I don't know whom to believe."

Then, I hear people say this, "Well, I read the Bible preacher, I pick it up every once in awhile. I try to read the Bible but it is just so difficult to understand. All of the different denominations, television programs and preachers are trying to prove what they believe by the Bible. They can be miles and poles apart and they still try to prove it by the Bible."

My friends; listen to me just a moment. Here is the problem. Our Lord gives it right here to the people in the temple that day. Here is the problem, there are two things: You see, He says, "*My doctrine is not of man, it's not of man nor from man.*" The doctrine of God, the doctrine of eternal life is not of man. We have to quit following men. We've got to quit listening to the wisdom and arguments of men. We're going to have to start listening to God.

You see; "*Your faith does not stand in the wisdom of men.*" It doesn't matter how wise they may seem. "*Your faith, (Paul said), must stand in the power of God.*" This is one of the things that he said in **First Corinthians**. He said, "*I didn't come to you with enticing words of men's wisdom. I didn't come to you with eloquence of speech, I came to you with (the simple, plain gospel of God), the Word of God, that your faith should not stand in my wisdom or any other man's wisdom, but in the power of God.*"

That is our problem. We are following men. We are listening to men. We are debating with human beings. In the gospel of God, it says plainly, "*It is not of man.*" Even Paul said that in **Galatians One**, he said, "*I didn't receive my gospel from men, or of men, I was taught the gospel by the revelation of the Son of God.*"

If my voice or any other man's voice is the only voice you hear, (I'm not talking about hearing funny voices in the air). I am talking about hearing God speak from heaven through His Word. If my voice or the voice of any man is the only voice you hear, nothing of any consequence will be accomplished. You have to hear Him speak who speaks through His Word. He is the Word of God.

You see; men do not reveal the gospel. Men do not explain the gospel, it is God's gospel and God reveals it. Christ said, "*My doctrine is not of man, My doctrine is the doctrine of My Father who sent Me.*" Paul says in **First Corinthians Two**, "*The natural man*

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*receiveth not the things of God, they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, they are spiritually discerned.”*

So, here are these two things. I will say this is the problem. People say, “that they do not understand the Bible, because there are so many denominations.” Here is the problem, **number one**: We’ve got to understand this, let this be established. “*Our gospel is not of man.*” It is not what this man says or that man says or the other man says. The question is, “What does God say?”

Here is the **second problem**: Besides knowing that salvation and eternal life in Christ is only revealed by God and taught by God, there has to be a willingness to be taught. There has to be willingness and a desire to know what God says about Himself. We can’t be content with our traditions, content with our customs and ceremonies. We have to have that deep, personal desire to know what God says. So, there is the great problem!

It doesn’t matter how many denominations, doctrines, preachers or programs there are in this world. It doesn’t matter how many people are different. We are not listening to people anyway. We’re not following people anyway. We’re not being taught of men anyway.

Our doctrine is not ours; it is God’s doctrine. It is God’s Word and God’s gospel and God’s truth. God teaches it. God reveals it. The Spirit of God reveals it. It is revealed to people who really want to know Him. Do you understand what I am saying? This is the problem.

Who today is truly seeking the truth of God? Who is really seeking the truth of God? Who is willing to part with his religious tradition? Who is really willing to depart from his preconceived notion?

We are all brought up in some denomination. We are born to parents who are this, that or the other. We just follow what they have always held to, even our great-grandfathers. It is just a rut, with both ends knocked out and we stay in that rut. Who is willing to be done with his religious traditions and his preconceived notions and his wisdom of the flesh? Who is willing to be done with his experiences, professions and works and ready to come to the Word of God as a little child, willing and ready to be taught of God? Who is willing? That is what Christ said, “*If any man will to know God’s will, he’ll know it.*”

Now, those are the two things. How does this fellow know? They said, “He’s never studied. He’s never been in our institutions. He’s never been in our program. He’s never been under our supervisor.” No, he’s been taught of God! If a man wills, really desires to know the truth, he will know it.

Well, here is a question. Someone may say, “Preacher, while you are on that subject of someone who really wants to know the truth, what would you say are the characteristics of a person who truly wills and desires to know the will of God? What do you think are the true signs? What do you look for when you are preaching, teaching, witnessing or trying to

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help someone with the Gospel, and the truth of God? What signs do you look for which reveal that a man is sincere and honest before God?"

Well, I'll give you several. Listen to me, Our Lord said, "*If any man wills, truly desires to know God, he will know Him,*" if he desires to know the truth. I would say that the first sign is this, the **first** characteristic is: If that person, (man or woman, young or old), who truly wants to know God, is sincerely, and genuinely seeking the Lord Himself.

He is not seeking an experience. He's not seeking a good and friendly church. He's not seeking some doctrine that he thinks is strong enough. He wants to know God. There is where it starts. The scripture says, "*You shall seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.*" What is the one word there that is used over and over again? What is the prominent word used in the scripture? The scripture says, "*You shall seek (Me) and find (Me) when you search for (Me) with all your heart.*"

I want to know God and eternal life is to know God. I don't want to know just about God; it is to know God. David said, "*As the thirsty deer panteth for the water brooks, my soul panteth for Thee, the only true God.*" David wanted to know God. Paul said, "*O, that I may win Christ and be found in Him.*"

Most people are concerned with the right discipline or the right doctrine or church ordinances, forms or ceremonies. Do you kneel or do you stand? Do you come on Sunday morning or Saturday night? Do you pay 10% or what do you do? This sort of thing has nothing to do with it. "*O, that I may know Him,* (Paul said), *and the power of His resurrection.*" When he gave his testimony, he said, "*I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed to Him against that day.*" Salvation is a person, not an experience or walking an isle. Salvation is not a feeling or a vision or a positive, mental attitude. It is not an emotional experience; it is in knowing God. Salvation is daily knowing God and seeking God.

Here is the **second** characteristic of a person who is really seeking the Lord. This person really desires to know God and the truth of God. I will say this; he always has before him the value of his soul. That is right, He always has before him the value of his soul.

You see; it is of greatest importance that I know God. "*For, what shall it profit me if I gain the whole world and lose my soul?*" I have to know God. "*It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that,*" that is what I am concerned about. It's not just death that I am apprehensive about; it is "*after that.*" "*It's appointed unto men once to die, after that.*"

What are you going to do about, "*after that?*" "*After that is the judgment.*" After that is eternity and after that it will be glory or damnation. After that, there will be comfort or condemnation. That's the problem. Shall I seek the approval of men and be rejected of God? I would be a fool. Shall I seek the riches of the world and lose eternal riches? I would be a fool. Shall I seek acceptance here, and approval here? After that stand and hear Him say, "*Depart from Me, I never knew you?*" I would be a fool. I have one eternal

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soul that shall spend eternity somewhere and that is the main reason that I am interested in knowing God. Is it well with your soul? That person, who is seeking God, always has this in his mind, the value of his soul.

**Thirdly**, I believe that the one who truly desires to know God is aware of his sins. I really do. This is a sin question. I hear people say, "It's no more the sin question." Oh yes it is too! It is a sin question. Anybody who truly desires to know God is aware of his sins before God, and before the Holiness of God. The Bible says, "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*" The Bible says, "*If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar and His Word is not in us.*"

David was aware of his sin. David said, "*My sins are ever before me. Against Thee and Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight.*" He said, "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*" That is what Paul declared. "*All we like sheep have gone astray.*"

Our Lord told about two men who went down to the temple to pray. I suppose you might say that they were seeking God. They both went to the temple and they both went to pray. One of them prayed this way, "*I thank you God; I'm not like other men. I'm not a sinner.*" "*The other man would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast and said, God be merciful to me, the sinner.*"

Christ said, "*That man went home justified.*" The other man was condemned. So, it is a sin question isn't it? What are we going to do about our sins? How can sin be put away? Who is going to cleanse us from sin?

I believe, that a person who really wants to know the truth of God, wants to know God, he wants to know the truth of God because of the value of his soul and because of his sins. He knows that his sins are between him and God. He wants to know if his sins are forgiven.

**Fourthly:** The one who truly desires to know God is aware of this fact too; He not only knows that he is a sinner, but he is aware that he is not and cannot and will not be able to come to God on his own merit. Wouldn't you say that? In other words, this person knows he's a sinner and he knows that he cannot come to God who is Holy and righteous, in his own merit. He has to have help. He has to have a Saviour and a Substitute. He has to have a Mediator.

That is what the Publican prayed in the temple. He said, "*Lord, let Thy blood be propitiation for me on the mercy seat.*" You see, "*In my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*" I can't honor God. I can't please God. "*In the flesh, no man can please God,*" the scripture says. "*It's not by works of righteousness which we have done but it is according to His mercy, He hath saved us.*"

So, a man who truly wants to know the will of God knows this, He cannot satisfy the righteousness of God. He cannot, by his own merit, power, works or righteousness, make

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himself acceptable to God. He has to have a Mediator. There has to be someone between him and God. There has to be someone who is God and man. There has to be someone who can take hold of God, and be accepted and take hold of him. He has to have someone take hold of him and bring him to God. That is what it said about Christ in **First Peter**; *“He died the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.”*

Now, who shall it be? Can a ransom be found? Can righteousness be found? Can a substitute be found? I will tell you this; it must be someone who God has appointed. We are the offender, not God. It can't be one of our choices; it has to be one of His choices. Secondly, it must be one who has a suitable sacrifice, *“Someone who has somewhat to offer,”* Paul said. There has to be a suitable sacrifice. There has to be a sacrifice and righteousness in which God will be pleased. We have to have that.

**Thirdly**, it has to be one who has a perfect life. It has to be one who can honor the law and justice on our behalf. It has to be one who can die for us, and yet live again. It must be a faithful High Priest and a Mediator, and such a one, and the only one is Christ our Lord. Do you see that?

So, a man who wills to know God's will; he seeks the Lord. He seeks the Lord earnestly because he knows the value of his soul. He seeks the Lord as a humble sinner. He knows, like David, *“Who is man that Thou are mindful of him?”* He knows that he cannot come alone. He knows he has nothing to bring. *“In my hands no price I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling.”* He knows that he has nothing that God can be in agreement with. He can't please God. So, someone has to come before him. Someone has to bring him to God, someone whom God will accept. He has to have a sacrifice in which God will be pleased. There has to be someone who will fully atone. That one is Christ!

I will tell you this; one who truly desires to know God will be willing to be saved on God's terms. Now listen, his salvation will only be on God's terms.

You see; this was the problem that Naaman had. He had leprosy. He wanted to be cleansed. The trouble was that he wanted to be cleansed on his terms. The prophet of God told him what to do and he answered in this way, *“I thought you would do this. That is not the way that I would do it.”* That was the Pharisee's problem. They would not submit to the baptism of repentance. They didn't believe that they were sinners who deserved death. The rich young ruler wouldn't do what Christ told him to do. He wouldn't part with the world and follow Christ.

This is what I am saying! If a person really wants to know the will of God, he will be willing to be saved on God's terms. God dictates the terms, not us. Those terms are repentance toward God and faith in Christ Jesus. The scripture says in **Isaiah Chapter 55**, *“Let the wicked forsake his way, let the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts and let him return to the Lord,”* the Lord's ways, the Lord's thoughts. God will have mercy on him. Let him bow to our God and God will abundantly pardon.

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What we have to be willing to do is forsake what we think. We have to forsake our thoughts, our ways, and our own wills. God must save men in a way that is consistent to His righteousness. God saves sinners in a way, whereby, He can be just and justifier. God saves sinners in the way that His wisdom and His holiness are honored.

When the Lord took upon Himself and counseled in eternity and purposed to save sinners, He took into consideration the fact that we were unable to do anything, and that we were unable to provide or produce anything. But, His main consideration was this: "*how can he that is born of woman be clean?*" How can God be just and justify the ungodly? How can a man who is worthy of hell be taken to heaven? How can a man who is guilty, be declared innocent?

God has got to deal with sinners in a way that will be consistent with His justice and His righteousness. One who truly desires to know God will not only bow to the will of God but to the Word of God.

I hope that is helpful!